between Kolkata and Bagdogra. The frequency of operation of this service has been increased to five days a week in the winter Schedule effective 28th October, 2001.

Upgradation of Madurai Airport

2898. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a long pending demand with Government to modernize and upgrade the Madurai Airport in Tamil Nadu to meet the international demands;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) by when a favourable decision is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (c) There have been demands from Members of Parliament and Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry for modernisation and upgradation of Madurai Airport. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has following plans for upgradation / modernisation of Madurai Airport:^

(i) Construction of new terminal building for 400 passengers at a time.

(ii) Strengthening and extension of runway from 5900 ft. to 7500 ft. for AB,-320 class of aircraft operations.

State Government have been requested to acquire 60 acres of land for extension of runway. AAI has deposited Rs. 3.05 crores with the State District Authorities for compensation to the land owners. Work can be taken up after the required land, free from all encumbrances, is handed over by the State Government to AAI.